1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

[P. 187-A]

802 speaking archer bands in the northeastern part of the Ituri, near Gombari. He finds the only common characteristic to be the habit of counting in pairs and the use of the term "many" for anything over five. Finger signs for numbers up to five and a separate sign for 10 are used also by the Mamvu villagers. Thus 15 arrows would be "many times two arrows and one." Some of the examples that he gives show either the disinterest or lack of skill of these archers in exact numeration—such as the woman who for totals of four and seven arrows (the article used by Maes for his tests) gave, respectively, the numbers 40 and 10.

278 824 The use of effective poisons is well attested. Geil (1905), who reported reliably on other aspects of the life of Efe archers, mentions their knowledge of antidotes. Schebesta (1941, 65) denies having come across these. He (1941, 228 ff.) does, however, give details of various effective medicines prepared from forest plants. In [155] some instances these medicines, or the methods of application, have magical significance. They [157] seem unable to cure such afflictions as certain types of fever, leprosy, advanced dysentery, and gout.

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P.222-C]

Far less important than disease or accidental death is animal hostility—elephants, buffalo, and leopards being the major sources of danger. It is extremely rare for any Pygmy to be killed by one of these animals. The net-hunting Mbuti have effective medicines against poisonous snakes.

For most illnesses, says Putnam, the Pygmy can find a local remedy. For stomach upsets and diarrhea an enema (a hollow reed with a gourd gummed to one end) is administered, with the use of vegetable decoctions containing *gorogoro* bark for the former complaint, and *tebvo* liana for the latter. These enemas are also used to produce abortions. For ailments that they are unable to cure and that are foreign to them, some may seek the help of a villager witch doctor, though Mbuti opinion varies as to their efficiency.

Death, then, is accepted as just as natural a phenomenon as birth, and the body is accorded little ritual respect. There are, unlike Schebesta's account for the archers, cited examples of wailing. The following instances taken from the notes of Anne Putnam illustrate its extent.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P.232-A]

278 411 their arrows but seldom achieved the same effect. The ingredients were known to him, and he concluded some special skill was used in the actual preparation. There is no mention of antidotes to these poisons.

278 Putnam knew of the existence of effective medicine among the net hunters, but no details survive in the notes. Anne Putnam's notes, however, mention a number of cases in which she observed the use of indigenous medicines and treatment.

752 757 During a fight a boy was knocked unconscious by a blow from a piece of wood. He was immediately propped up; the main concern seemed to be to prevent him from lying flat on the ground. Even when semiconscious, the boy was not allowed to lie down. This possibility seemed to frighten the Pygmies more than anything else, and for a while no other treatment was given. Then some incisions were made on his chest, and a leaf was applied.

757 Against toothache a certain leaf (not identified) is chopped fine and mixed with water. This mixture is poured from a leaf cup down each nostril.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

854 304 757 Newborn infants are scarified on the stomach, chest, and leg, and the wounds are treated with herbs, often mixed with goat manure if the net hunters are near a village.

757 The Mbuti in this area claim to have a method which they have practiced for a long time for the treatment of paralysis. Examples given, however, describe this treatment as being given to villager or Pygmy children by villagers. The treatment can also be given to an adult. For paralysis of the legs, it consists essentially of standing the patient in a pit, filling it, and stamping the earth down hard. Only the upper part of the patient's body, which is continually washed with warm water, is left above ground. The stem of the *atumba* (a small plant resembling a dandelion) is cut and cooked with manioc and rubbed into a light incision in the affected limb. The patient may be kept in the pit for four hours a day for a week; each time he is taken out he is washed with warm water. It is claimed that after this treatment the patient will be able to walk, however crippled he was beforehand.

A similar treatment is reported for sprained back or arm. The patient is laid flat in a shallow pit. He is covered from knees to chest with a mixture of earth and leaves, about one

I: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

inch thick, packed tight. The top layer of dry leaves and kindling are soaked with oil and set on fire. The fire is kept going for about four hours, then the patient is taken out and hot leaves are applied. This treatment may be followed by hot baths, scarification and insertion of herbal medicine into the wounds, and resting on a bed, but none of this is said to be absolutely necessary. 757 •

A young man, given to being seized with trembling fits, is calmed by having incisions on his stomach rubbed with a black powder. A liquid is poured down his nose from a leaf funnel.

A certain type of bark, *ikanya*, extremely poisonous, is used to procure an abortion by making a decoction from it and giving it to the pregnant woman to inhale. It appears that even inhaling the dry bark might be effective, but is not certainly so. 847 278 824

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

ence and natural life. There is no practical cause—the cause itself is supernatural. I include various *rites de passage* under religion because such rites involve a thoroughgoing belief in the supernatural. The nature of the supernatural, however, varies greatly as seen by Mbuti and as seen by villagers. Both peoples, however, do have a belief in the supernatural; that is, scientifically nonexplicable powers that are invested in another class of beings, without form or substance, which we call *spiritual*. It is belief in these spiritual beings that is the essence of what we here call religion.

CURATIVE MAGIC

As indicated above, we are not here in the least concerned with acts, of either the Mbuti or the villagers, simply because they involve an assumed but scientifically false connection between cause and effect. We use the term "magic" as a translation of the native term, which groups together divers curative activities in the belief that all are equally scientific. Thus the penicillin that cures a sore is magic just as much as the antelope horn that cures a spell of bad hunting.

In trying to assess how far the village world impinges on the forest world in this respect, then, we have to see what situations there are for which the Mbuti have no cure and which they wish to cure, and for which the villagers do have a cure. Or, indeed, we must look to see if the reverse situation exists.

When I say there is little magic in the forest world of the Mbuti, I mean that there are few curative activities, and for the very simple reason that there are relatively few situations that require curing. For most Mbuti who have reached adolescence the life expectancy is good, as is the expectancy of good health. For most minor physiological disorders the Mbuti seem to have effective remedies, some of which are cited in Appendix II together with details of the botanical identification of the plants, wherever I was able to be sure, or reasonably sure, that these were the only plants used. Such remedies cover not only the mild fevers, aches and pains, and sicknesses that may come the way of the Mbuti, but they also cover accidental injury such as may be incurred by falling on a spear, by being attacked by a wild animal, bitten by a snake, stung by bees, or by falling from a tree, breaking or twisting an arm or leg. Such injuries, however, occur remarkably seldom.

For these particular curative activities the Mbuti are acknowledged

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

as being masters, and their help is constantly being sought by villagers, not so well versed in forest lore. It has been shown, however, that where the Mbuti see a remedy that is more effective than theirs, such as modern drugs (only in some cases are these apparently superior), they will eventually seek them. Insofar as local dispensaries were run by villagers, the Mbuti had to rely on the villagers for such drugs. I do not consider this an instance of dependence, however, as up to the end of my last field trip the Mbuti would only seek such help when they were in the village; in the forest they found their own remedies adequate. Even more, when sickness or injury befell them in the village, the common reaction was to return to the forest.

But here we may note a significant difference in attitude to magic, or curative activity. Childbirth is a time which is thought of by both Mbuti and villagers as being attended by the possibility of danger, at least. The Mbuti think in terms of physical danger, and they have precautions that they take in the diet and behavior of the expectant mother before birth, and apparently effective knowledge of midwifery, including recognized ways of dealing with difficult births. After birth there are known cures for any weakness the infant or mother might show. What is lacking, among the Mbuti, is precisely what is dominant among the villagers: a felt need for protection against the supernatural.

A village mother and child will both have, according to how wealthy the family is, a number of potions to drink (which may or may not have medical significance, but are thought of as being protective) and divers charms to wear. The protection is thought to be necessary against *unknown* dangers. The difference between the two peoples is in the extent of this unknown. An Mbuti infant will have a vine bracelet or belt tied to it almost immediately after birth, and a small piece of wood or two will be fixed to the vine. It is stated that the vine and the wood convey to the child the health and strength of the forest. There is no apparent concern for any supernatural dangers, and no precautionary steps taken.

From the village point of view the lack of such measures involves the child and possibly the mother in great danger, and out of self-concern as much as out of concern for the Mbuti, the villagers proffer charms in abundance to expectant mothers and newborn children. However, the need is only felt by the villagers, not by the Mbuti.

This is precisely the difference we find when we seek other situations for which only the villagers have a cure—they are situations in

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

THE LESSER *MOLIMO* (*molimo madé*)

224 Apart from death there are two major crisis areas over which the Mbuti may have little or no effective control, poor hunting and sickness. But they do have a certain amount of control, and it is frequently effective. Poor hunting is more often than not remedied simply by hunting elsewhere, and it is rare that a band goes hungry for any reason except laziness. Against sickness the Mbuti have many remedies that are plainly effective. In particular they know how to clean open wounds and prevent infection, they know how to set and mend broken limbs, they know how to reduce fevers, and they know how to alleviate minor ailments such as headache, toothache and mild stomach disorders. They also have effective remedies against snakebite. So in case of sickness they either cure the patient, or else the patient becomes well of his own accord, or else he dies, the latter event leading to the greater *molimo*.

In such crises, then, time alone usually provides a solution, and the Mbuti are accustomed to waiting for these situations to improve. If bad hunting persists, however, or sickness shows no sign of alleviation, then it becomes a matter "of the forest." There is no rite or ceremony, but in the evenings the men gather around a central fire and sing *molimo* songs, thereby attracting the attention of the forest to their plight. The songs do not convey any specific request from the Mbuti for the betterment of their condition, it being considered necessary only to awaken the forest, for then it is for the forest to act as it will. Being benevolent, like a parent, whatever it does is accepted as being good, though it may not be understood.

Normally a lesser *molimo* lasts for only a few days, for during that time there is likely to be a change in the situation that is taken as an indication that the forest has awakened. The evening songs are not accompanied by any of the preliminaries that mark the greater *molimo*, nor are the women and children quite so rigorously excluded, and there is not the same order of dancing, which in the greater *molimo* is of the utmost importance. In the lesser *molimo* the dancing will be done by youths only, and be casual and mildly erotic. Above all there will be no use made of the *molimo* trumpet.

All adults youths and men are expected to take part, and although there will be criticism if someone does not attend, there will not be the same violent reaction that there is against such offenders in the greater molimo.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P. 313]

MEDICAL TREATMENT

The following list represents only a third of the total number of treatments noted; for the rest it was not possible to obtain exact identification of the plants used. Only the general identification is given below of the treatments cited here, the full details being lodged with Smith, Kline, & French, who generously supported the project. [757] 824 [122]

HEADACHE: *amongolo pepé* (menispermaceae)
Leaves are pounded and rubbed into forehead.

doré (violaceae)
Seeds are pressed, and the juice is lightly rubbed on the forehead.

sungusungu (orchidaceae)
Leaves are roasted, then rubbed into light incisions in the skin of the forehead.

KNEE ACHE: *amakokosu* (uragoga pedunculari)
Stem, leaf and bloom are roasted, then rubbed into incisions on knee.

tapha (strychnos icaja)
Leaves are roasted and applied to incisions.

SORE THROAT: *kasa* (mapana bieleri)
Leaves are wrapped tightly around the throat.

EYE INFLAMMATION: *manoka* (manotes pruinosa)
Leaves are rubbed well between the hands, then put into a leaf cone. A little water is poured into the cone and allowed to drip into the eye.

STOMACHACHE: *amasobo* (violaceae)
The bark is stripped from young shoots, the core being pounded and roasted. The ashes are rubbed into incisions made over the afflicted area.

apisikalukba (araceae)
Leaves are pounded, water added, warmed, and drunk.

karama (dracaena maculata)
The leaves are pounded with salt, mixed with water, the concoction drunk. (The juice of the pounded leaf, without salt, is also put in the eyes of children "to make them see well.")

ebambu (annonaceae)
Bark is cut into small pieces, water is poured over it; when the water is red, a small quantity is drunk.

757 824 833 IMPOTENCE IN MALE: *tededasi* (rubiaceae)
Leaves are roasted, and the ashes rubbed into light incisions made above the penis.

teba (rubiaceae)
Leaves are roasted, and if the penis pains, the ashes are rubbed into incisions in the skin of the penis itself.

757 752 TOE ROT: *apatekaka* (hippocrateaceae)
Leaves are roasted and rubbed into incisions.

824 FOOT SORES: *ikengbe* (ochnaceae)
Stem of plant is warmed over a fire, then blown through, so that the juice enters the sores.

ikengbe (convolvulaceae)
Same as above.

HEART PAINS: *banga bamemé* (compositae)
Leaves are pounded, soaked with water, which is drunk when it becomes red.

HEMORRHOIDS: *amekulu* (beilschmieda spp.)
Stem is roasted, the ashes rubbed well into the buttocks around the affected area, and left on. Repeated after three days.

TOOTHACHE: *amabulubululubu* (tiliaceae)
Leaves are pulped to a juice, diluted with water for a child, funneled through a leaf into the nostrils. Said to afford instantaneous relief.

manganza (leeaceae)
Berries are roasted, crushed, and the ashes rubbed into incisions on the jaw.

OPEN WOUNDS: *ndindimia* (connaraceae)
The bark of a twig is carefully shaved, and the juice blown through the twig into the sore or wound. The bark is then packed into the wound to stop bleeding and to prevent dirt from entering. After three days the bark is removed and a fresh application is made, using less bark shavings to allow the wound to close gradually.

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

763 She looked up at me with eyes that already had a bluish film over them and caught hold of my hand. She said she wanted to die near her son and was glad to be back again. She agreed to take some white man's medicine, and the dispenser from the Station de Chasse was sent for. This was quite a departure, as this family had always resisted more strongly than any the use of modern medicine.

Ekianga was almost beside himself. Gray-haired Asofalinda, no longer stiff and rough, but full of kindness, tried to comfort her younger brother, but she was too full of grief herself. She knelt on the ground beside her mother and wept. The old lady was the only one who seemed fully in control of herself, though the room was filled with wailing men, women and children. When the dispenser came she flickered to life with a burst of her old flame and slapped feebly at him with a bony hand as he pulled gently at her bark cloth to give her an injection, telling him to mind what he was doing. I felt her wince as the needle went in, but she continued looking up and smiling her old sweet smile. She was among her relatives and her friends, and that was all she wanted; she knew the injection would do no good. She held onto me so tightly that I couldn't leave until she finally dozed off; then when her grasp relaxed I quietly left and went out into the sunlight. Everyone was sitting around morosely, almost angrily. Even the little children, whom I had seen playing contentedly through other funerals, were quiet, holding onto their mothers in a frightened way. Everyone was watching Ekianga's fine wooden door, waiting for the end, waiting for old Balekimito to die for ever.

It was only a matter of hours. She never woke up.

The demonstration of grief that followed was no mere formal expression ordained by custom; it was something very real and disturbing. I have seen death in a Negro village where the atmosphere was one of fear—fear of sorcery, of the power of evil that had been unleashed. Here it was quite different. It was not a feeling of

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4.9
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

made his way painfully to join the other boys, all sitting in a line on logs. Immediately after being cut they are made to sit down and join the others in singing one of the many work songs they will have to learn during the coming months. This takes their mind off the pain, which is all the more considerable because after the operation the wound is wrapped in a leaf containing a native medicine that is full of salt. Kaoya was very roughly handled, and Masalito ran up to him and put his arms around him, hugging him tight to give him strength. The villagers howled with laughter, but Masalito was more concerned with Kaoyo than with them.

Not long afterward the boys were made to dance, and then put to rest on a special bed made of split logs, laid side by side on a rough frame that kept them two feet or so off the ground. The boys lay face downward along the length of the logs, their heads resting on pillows made of plantain leaves. Over the bed there was a rough shelter, sloping down to the ground behind, but open all along the front and on two sides. From the roof was hung a sacred banana, which initiates and instructors would set swinging as an understood command for the boys to start singing. The boys were forbidden to touch the banana, being told they would die if they did.

There were all sorts of other taboos, or restrictions. To get wet, particularly by being outside when it rained, was sure to bring death. To eat certain foods was strictly prohibited. The boys had to eat without using their hands directly, spearing the food with sticks. They were forbidden to eat with their initiated relatives. The sound of the bull-roarer, a piece of wood that makes a strange whirring noise when spun around on the end of a cord, was meant to be the voice of a forest demon, and the boys had to show due respect and terror when they heard it.

During the daytime, when the villagers were present, either as instructors or just as visitors, the boys adhered faithfully to all these and many other rules. By their own rules, however, the villagers were

585 628 many new faces, and no doubt this in itself laid the groundwork for future matchmaking. For a month or so after marriage she would work for and with the other women of the camp, and then set up housekeeping on her own.

Illness and Death

• 757 For most of his bodily ills the pygmy can find a local remedy. Gastric disorders and diarrhea plague them rather frequently. For these the universal cure is an enema (enemas are even used to produce abortions). Any pygmy, apparently, can give an enema to any other pygmy, but as a rule it is the women who give them to their husbands, children, and female friends. The instrument is a long reed with a gourd gummed on one end; the operator thrusts the other end into the patient's rectum and holds up the gourd end. The gourd is filled with various vegetable decoctions used in solution; these include the *tebvo* liana for diarrhea and *gorogoro* bark for stomach upsets.

755 177 When a pygmy is suffering from some mysterious ailment which he and his fellows are unable to cure and which seems to be magical in nature, he will go to the village of his Negro hosts and beg the local witch doctor to cure him by sucking out "disease objects," by cupping with horns, or by the use of herbs.

165 The greatest single cause of mortality in the pygmy community is falling from a tree. When a pygmy falls from such a height, he has no real chance of survival, for there are seldom branches below him. The second most frequent cause of death is falling branches. As the pygmy camp is always constructed in the primary forest itself, never in a clearing, a branch falling in a windstorm may hit a house, killing four or five people at once.

[P.340-B]